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TRIBUTE OF FRENCH ARTISTS TO AMERICA



WATCHING THEIR VILLAGE BURN. BY P. A. LAURENS.



HOMELESS VICTIMS OF WAR. BY HUBERT DENIS ETCHEVERRY.

Eighty-two Pictures, Drawn as a Mark of Appreciation, Installed in the National Museum at Washington

A VALUABLE collection of eighty-two pictures and sketches has recently been installed in the United States Museum at Washington without ceremony or publicity. Executed by eminent contemporary French artists, the pictures have been presented to the people of the United States by the citizens of the French Republic as a token of their appreciation of the sympathetic efforts of American citizens toward relieving the distress caused by the European war. One of the most beautiful of the pictures, a crayon drawing by Antoine Calbet, is intended to symbolize the attitude of present day America to present day France. It represents a young and beautiful woman compassionately embracing another whose attitude is eloquent of grief.

The gift of the pictures was conveyed by France to the American people through the State Department at Washington. It was wholly due to the discretion of State Department authorities, mindful of the fact that America is a neutral nation, that the collection was so quietly and unceremoniously housed in the National Museum.

In striking contrast to the informal way in which the pictures were installed in this country were the brilliant presentation ceremonies that took place in France when they were handed to Ambassador Sharp for conveyance to the citizens of the United States. An account of these

ceremonies, given by Ambassador Sharp in a letter to the Secretary of State, is preserved with other state papers in the files of the department.

Mr. Sharp says of the presentation that it took place "at the Sorbonne, in the presence of a great audience of about 3,000 people. The ceremonies had been most carefully planned to make the occasion as impressive and memorable as possible and were carried out in every detail. The national airs of both France and America were sung and the flags of the two nations were conspicuous in the decorations of the auditorium."

In his presentation address M. Hanotaux, the French statesman, asked that the group of pictures "be preserved in the archives of the American people as a permanent proof of the faithfulness and gratitude of the sister republic and to mark that it is all France thanking all America."

The eighty-two pictures consist of water colors, pen and ink sketches and drawings in chalk, crayon, charcoal and pencil. The fact that many of them are sketches and studies imparts a personal character to the collection which will cause its value to enhance with the passing of years. For instance, a virile figure sketch done in pencil bears the inscription written in a free and flowing hand, "Aux Etats Unis—Auguste Rodin—reconnaissance."

The artists who contributed the pictures have taken pains to emphasize the friendliness of France's message to America. Every picture

has been inscribed by the man who executed it with sentiments of gratitude and affection for the American people. Thus Carolus-Duran has contributed a pencil sketch to the collection which is inscribed "Aux Etats Unis—petit souvenir d'une grande sympathie."

Jean Paul Laurens has sent the figure of a

soldier done in charcoal. Laurens's greatest work, a painting of St. Genevieve, is in the Pantheon at Paris and is known to thousands of Americans. Francois Flameng, another teacher of distinction, has sent a water color entitled "Saint Cloud."

Henri Zo is represented by a sketch sugges-

Gift Made in Grateful Recognition of Aid This Country Has Given to Sufferers in France and Belgium

tive of power in every line. The figure of a woman of heroic size and carriage stands upon a hilltop, her face alight with victory, in her hand the tricolor of France. "To our friends in the United States," the artist has written in French, "May liberty continue to enlighten the world!" It was Henri Zo who, at the beginning of the war converted his studio into a cafe where aged artists whose incomes are curtailed by the present hard times in France are served with nourishing meals at cost or free of charge.

From the aged landscape painter Henri Harpignies, who has passed his ninetieth birthday and is now the sole survivor of the famous school of 1830, there has come a charming landscape.

A beautiful picture included in the group is one by Paul Albert Laurens that might be a symbolic figure of Belgium. It represents a mother crouching to the earth in an attitude of terror and holding her child to her breast while she watches a burning village.

There are pictures also that give an insight into life at the front. One which injects a touch of humor among unusually sombre subjects is by Abel Truchet. It is called "The Soldier," and depicts a half frozen sentry on duty. The lonely figure is the only living thing seen in a landscape of snow and ice. Beneath it the artist has written in pencil, "To think that I once aspired to a life in the open air!"

All who view the pictures will be attracted by the exquisite figure of a young girl, done in

crayon. But possibly few will recognize in the name of the artist, Paul Emile Chabas, the creator of a picture which has gained much notoriety in America. This is "September Morn," reproduced innumerable times in this country.

Victor Segoffin and Antonin Mercie are two sculptors of eminence who, like Rodin, sent studies. Segoffin's, a man's head expressive of horror, bears this greeting: "To the great American Republic of the United States, the respectful homage and gratitude of a French sculptor."

The gift of the pictures was acknowledged on behalf of the American people by a brief note written to Ambassador Sharp by Secretary of State Lansing, who sent a simple message of thanks to the citizens of France and said that the National Museum had been decided upon as the most appropriate place in which to house so beautiful and valuable a collection of works of art.

Though the presentation ceremonies at the Sorbonne took place months ago, it was not until some time after Secretary Lansing had acknowledged the gift that the albums containing the pictures reached this country. On account of their great value the pictures were retained by Ambassador Sharp until their safe delivery in this country could be assured. They were brought over and were delivered personally at the State Department by Mrs. John Coolidge, wife of a former Harvard professor, now an attache of the American Embassy at Paris.



WINTER AT THE FRONT. BY P. M. DUPUY.



THE GREETING OF THE NATIONS. BY A. COLBET.



HARVEST TIME. BY JULES EMILE ZINGG.